

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Submitted herewith are replacement drawings for FIGS. 1-3 and 20-24. The submitted drawings are intended to replace the previously submitted drawings.

Attachment: Five (5) Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in the application. Claims 13-26 and 28-34 stand withdrawn from consideration in response to the Restriction Requirement discussed with the Examiner on July 19, 2007. Examined claims 1-12 and 27 stand rejected.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references cited with the Information Disclosure Statement filed January 19, 2006 and acknowledged the claim for foreign priority (including receipt of a certified copy of the priority document from the International Bureau).

Election / Restriction Requirement

As requested by the Examiner, and in accord with the Response to Restriction Requirement filed on July 18, 2007, we propose confirming the election of Group IA, drawn to claims 1-12 and 27 which correlate to the plasma electrode structure.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner rejoin the withdrawn-currently amended claims 13-26 when the elected claims are in condition for allowance. These withdrawn claims are dependent on independent claims 1, 4 or 11, respectively.

Drawing Objection

The Examiner objected to the drawings indicating that reference numerals 601, 602 and 603 on page 29, are not referenced in the figures.

In response, Applicants submit the amended Figure 1 submitted herewith obviates this objection.

Additionally, Applicants submit corrected figures 2-3 and 20-24 to correct for improper reference numerals.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 27 under § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly the subject matter of the invention.

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner contends the phrase “including a plurality of electrode members each having a length shorter than that of said workpiece . . .” fails to distinctly claim the subject matter because infringement depends on the object worked on.

In response, we propose arguing this rejection is in error. First, it has been held that claim language including terms of degree do not necessarily render a claim indefinite. (MPEP 2173.05(b), *Seattle Box Co., v. Industrial Crating & Packaging*, 221 USPQ 568 (Fed. Cir. 1984). To the contrary, the acceptability of the claim language dependents upon whether one of ordinary skill in the art would understand what is claimed (*Id.*). Moreover, the claim limitation directed to a certain part of a wheelchair, “so dimensioned as to be insertable through the space between the doorframe of an automobile and one of the seats,” was held to be patentable. (*Id.*) Notably, this feature depends upon the automobile in which the wheelchair is inserted. Because these relational facts parallel the recitations of claim 1, we propose submitting claim 1 is sufficiently definite.

Thus, we propose submitting this rejection is in error and should be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 27, the Examiner alleges the recitations with regard to the features “introduction port forming part” and “said introduction port of said introduction forming part” are unclear.

In response, Applicants submit the present amendment to claim 27 obviates this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claim 1-6, 11-12 and 27 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Perrin et al. (US 6,281,469). Applicants traverse this rejection as follows.

Claim 1 as amended requires that each of the electrode members is elongate and extended in a direction in which the electrode members are arranged in a line and that one of the polarities is an electric field applying pole and the other of the polarities is a grounding pole.

However, Applicants submit Perrin fails to disclose the above noted features of claim 1. In Perrin, the sub-electrodes 12A, 12B are square not elongate as illustrated in Fig.15. The sub-electrodes in Fig.14 are elongate, but they are arranged in parallel perpendicular to the extending direction of each of the sub-electrodes. Furthermore, both of the sub-electrodes 12A, 12B are connected with RF voltage V11, V12 respectively (col.5, lines 45-51, Fig.7). Consequently, all of the sub-electrodes are "electric field applying poles," not "grounding poles" as recited.

Regarding figure 15, an arrangement of sub-electrode groups 12A and 12B are disclosed. The Examiner alleges that these two different sub-electrode groups have opposite polarity. However, Perrin fails to disclose any such feature.

In particular, Perrin merely discloses the sub-groups defined by 12A and 12B each have different potentials; not opposite polarity (col. 5, lines 44- 50; col. 7, lines 15-20). Specifically, Perrin discloses that these varying potentials differ in amplitude, phasing, frequency or shape. However, this does not support the Examiner's contention that the potentials of sub-electrodes 12A and 12B are ever of opposing polarity. Furthermore, as illustrated in figure 7, when three sub-electrode groups are used, A, B and C, it is impossible for all three to have opposite polarity.

Thus, Applicants submit claim 1 is allowable for at least this reason. Additionally, because claims 4, 11 and 27 recite features similar to those discussed above with regard to claim

1, Applicants submit these claims are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Further, Applicants submit claims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 12 are allowable, at least by virtue of their dependency.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 11 under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okui (JP 200109979). Applicants traverse this rejection as follows.

Applicants respectfully submit Okui (979) fails to disclose:

- (1) “each of the electrode members is elongate and extended in a direction in which the electrode members are arranged in a line”; or
- (2) “said first electrode row as a whole having a length corresponding to said workpiece,” as recited in claim 1.

First, In Okui, the electrode(s) 1-1(1-1') is/are cylindrical not elongate in Figs. 1, 2(b), 2(c), 2(d) and 7(b). The electrodes 1-1, 1-2 of Fig. 2(e) are not elongate. The electrodes 1-2 of Fig. 2(c) are elongate but arranged in parallel perpendicular to the extending direction of each of the electrodes 1-2.

Second, the Examiner contends Okui’s electrodes 1-1 or 1-2 correspond to the recited first electrode row. Additionally, the Examiner contends Okui’s substrate 3 corresponds to the recited workpiece. (*Office Action*, p. 12). However, as illustrated in figure 2(d) of Okui, both electrode row 1-1 and electrode row 1-2 are shorter in length than the substrate 3. Accordingly, Okui fails to disclose “said first electrode row as a whole having a length corresponding to said workpiece,” as recited in claim 1.

Thus, Applicants submit claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over Okui for at least this reason.

Regarding claim 11, Applicants submit Okui fails to disclose “each of the electrode members is elongate and extended in a direction in which the electrode members are arranged in a line” of claim 11. Specifically, in Okui, the electrodes 1-1, 1-2 of Fig. 2(e) are arranged in a line. The electrodes 1-1 are anode and the electrodes 1-2 are cathode. But the electrodes 1-1, 1-2 are not elongate.

Furthermore, Okui also fails to disclose “an introduction port communicated with a side in a direction orthogonal to the extending direction of said row-to-row gap, a jet port communicated with a side opposite to the introduction port of said row-to-row gap,” as recited in claim 11.

Thus, Applicants submit claim 11 is patentably distinguishable over Okui for at least these reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 7-10 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Perrin, in view of Koga et al. (US 6,518,990).

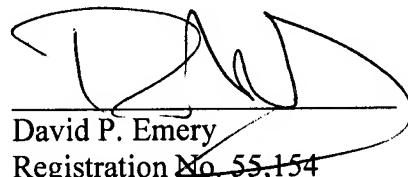
Applicants respectfully submit that because Koga, either taken alone or in combination with Perrin, fails to compensate for the above noted deficiencies of Perrin as applied to claim 4, claims 7-10 are patentably distinguishable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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